

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**Command Sergeant Major
Gary E. Koenitzer
U.S. Army, Retired**

Inducted June 7, 2019



Command Sergeant Major Gary E. Koenitzer was born in 1959 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He enlisted in the Army in 1980. Upon completion of Advanced Individual Training and Airborne School, he was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne). In 1982, Command Sgt. Maj. Koenitzer was assigned to the 1st Signal Brigade Fast Team in Korea, and then in 1983, he was assigned to Headquarters Company, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

In 1984, Command Sgt. Maj. Koenitzer volunteered for Cabin Beach, which later became 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), and deployed to Okinawa. He completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1986 as a Communications Sergeant and was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). In 1990, Command Sgt. Maj. Koenitzer was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Lewis, Washington, and served as the Signal Platoon Sergeant, Assistant Operations Sergeant Operational Detachment Alpha-194, Team Sergeant ODA-194 and Company Sergeant Major for Co. C, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne). In 1997, he was reassigned as Team Sergeant, ODA-136, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), and deployed in support of Joint Task Force Six and Uphold Democracy in Haiti, as well as seven countries in South East Asia. In 1998, Command Sgt. Maj. Koenitzer was assigned as Team Sergeant of ODA-395, 3rd Special Forces Group(A) and deployed to five African countries.

In 2000, he became the Company Sergeant Major of Co. C, 3rd Special Forces Group(A). After 9/11, he deployed as the Special Operations Liaison Element of the Combined Air Operations Command in Support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In the Spring of 2002, he joined his company and conducted numerous direct-action combat missions in Afghanistan. He was then assigned as Sergeant Major of Co. B, 2nd Battalion, and 1st Special Forces Group(A), where he deployed with Co. B to Zamboanga, Philippines, training three Philippine Infantry Battalions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom- Philippines.

In 2006, Command Sgt. Maj. Koenitzer became the Command Sergeant Major of 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group(A), and deployed to Iraq, as Command Sergeant Major of Combined Joint Special Operation Task Force Central, participating in numerous direct-action combat operations including the Battle of Basra.

In 2008, and until his retirement in 2010, Command Sgt. Maj. Koenitzer was assigned to the 1st Special Warfare Training Group(A), where he supervised the training of the Special Forces, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs Qualification courses, as well as advanced Army Special Operation skills training courses.

Command Sgt. Maj. Koenitzer's major awards in service include: Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with oak-leaf cluster, two campaign ribbons, three meritorious service medals and two Overseas Service Ribbons. His qualification badges include the Combat Infantryman Badge, Military Free Fall Master Parachutist Badge, Master Parachutist Badge and multiple jump badges and wings from foreign partners.

Since retiring, Command Sgt. Major Koenitzer served two terms as President of the Special Forces Association. His energetic leadership resulted in extensive membership growth, sustained financial stability and enduring gratitude from the regiment for his devotion to the Special Forces community.